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Central Intelligence Agency

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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

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CIA VIEWS ON THIRD WORLD POPULATION ISSUES

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Summary

Population change and the buildup of demographic pressures are important underlying determinants of political instability in Third World countries vital to US interests. Four identifiable elements of population change create demands in most developing countries that, if unmet, can lead to regime-threatening unrest.

-- Fast-growing youth populations
-- International migration
-- Explosive city growth
-- Changing ethnic balances

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Fast-Growing Youth Populations

We believe that many developing country governments are unlikely to meet the economic and social expectations of their growing youth populations. As a result, we expect that they will be increasingly vulnerable to youthful political activism.

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-- The numbers of youth requiring social services and entering the labor force are growing faster than most economies can absorb them. Frustrated by unmet expectations for education, jobs, housing, and other services, youth are receptive to recruiting by extremist politicians and religious zealots. According to UN figures, about 20 percent of the population of developing countries is in the 15 to 24 age group, a consequence of high population growth rates during the 1960s. Along with children 0 to 14 years of age, the two groups account for nearly 58 percent of the population as compared to only 38 percent in developed countries.

-- In Egypt, for example, 4.6 million young men in this age bracket were ready for jobs or advanced training in 1980. By 2000, even with the anticipated downturn in Egypt's population growth rate and trend toward higher age at marriage and lower fertility, 7 million men, most of them already born, will be in this age group. Many Egyptian youth have at least a primary school education, are politically aware, and have middle-class aspirations. Middle East scholars report that secondary school graduates are increasingly frustrated because their salaries do not exceed the wages earned by skilled laborers or foreigners. Even a college degree has diminishing value in overcrowded job markets.

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International Migration

Labor Migration

In our view, international labor migration, whether legal or illegal, touches political sensitivities in both sending and receiving countries.

-- We believe, for example, that political problems between the Mexican and US governments will intensify over border crossings. By the year 2000 at least 42 million, and possibly as many as 46 million, Mexicans will be in the labor force, roughly double the current number. In 1983 we estimate that 1.5 million Mexicans crossed the US border illegally to seek work compared with an estimated 800,000 to 1.1 million annually in recent years. If the same percentage of the labor force chooses to migrate illegally, the annual flow could be well over 2 million by 2000. No foreseeable degree of Mexican economic prosperity or government cooperation is likely to do more than slightly moderate the flow.

-- In Asia and the Middle East, labor-surplus developing countries have encouraged labor migration to the oil-rich countries of the Persian Gulf. As many as 3 million Pakistani and Egyptian workers, for example, have taken jobs in the Gulf. Their governments welcome the

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remittances sent home and the outlet for excess or inefficiently used indigenous labor, but are vulnerable to economic fluctuations in Persian Gulf States which could mean a sudden return of workers and lower levels of remittances that upset domestic, economic, and social stability.

-- The Persian Gulf States and Libya worry that political activists among the 6 million expatriates currently working in the region will commit terrorist acts or stir opposition to their regimes. They also fear that foreigners are diluting their traditional culture. The indigenous population's resentment towards expatriates is pushing those governments to replace foreign workers with nationals--even nationals with inadequate training and experience.

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Refugees

Refugee migration, whether voluntary or involuntary, raises political tensions on both sides of a border. Governments receiving refugee populations are weakened and drawn into the refugees' sometimes violent internecine conflicts as well as conflicts with the regime ousting the refugees. Even with generous aid from international and third country organizations, refugees drain host country human, physical, and economic resources. Socially, refugees often aggravate ethnic or sectarian tensions already present in the host society. Countries that involuntarily lose a majority of their educated elite following military or political strife find their efforts to revitalize the economy and reestablish services extraordinarily difficult.

-- Pakistan, as host to some 2 million Afghans, has experienced heightened ethnic tension in its North West Frontier Province and Baluchistan. Pakistanis complain that they must compete with refugees for jobs and other government programs. Relations between Pakistan and the Soviets and the Soviet-controlled Afghan Government are tense because Pakistan provides safe haven for the refugees and insurgent groups. Within the heavy refugee flow is a large share of Afghanistan's educated elite and student population. It will take at least a generation, in our view, for the Afghans to train a new leadership cadre. In the meantime, reliance on the expertise of Soviet advisers gives Moscow the opportunity to socialize an entire generation.

-- Middle East governments admitting Palestinian refugees have been pressured by the refugee communities to support Palestinian political goals.

-- Sudanese-Ethiopian relations are increasingly antagonistic following mutual but unwanted population exchanges. Sudan is host to roughly 400,000 Ethiopian

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refugees, about 170,000 Ugandan refugees, and several
thousand Chadians. Ethiopia, in turn, hosts some
Sudanese refugees. The influx of Ethiopians in Sudan's
cities has antagonized urban Sudanese. Many urban
refugees are westernized and Christian and resist putting
down roots in an Islamic country. They form a distinctly
alien presence that has sparked violence in the past and
may do so again.

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Explosive City Growth

Rapid urbanization makes effective management of large
cities increasingly difficult, siphons off money needed for rural
development, and challenges the competence and authority of
central governments. People with unmet expectations for housing
and jobs competing with neighbors from different ethnic,
religious, and educational groups make a politically volatile
mix, subject to manipulation by opposition elements.

-- Mexico City, the second largest city in the world, will
   be a major political problem for the Mexican Government
   well before the turn of the century. Today nearly 18
   million people press on land and water resources that,
   according to most analysts, can support a maximum of 20
   million. Nevertheless, the UN estimates that even if the
   growth rate is reduced by one-quarter, Mexico City's
   population will reach 25.2 million people in another
   decade, making it the largest city in the world. In our
   view, few solutions appear politically or economically
   feasible: the expansion of the city limits would call for
   greatly increased tax rates and a crackdown on squatter
   settlements (both politically costly); creation of high-
   speed tranportation links could bring a greatly expanded
   area into a new, greater Mexico City (costly in economic
   terms); or, the government could impose restrictions on
   movement into the city (an authoritarian response that
   would be without precedent and politically costly if not
   impossible).

-- Violent demonstrations and riots broke out in cities in
   Tunisia and Morocco in early 1984 over austerity measures
   that called for price rises in basic goods and
   services. In Egypt, memories of bread riots in Cairo in
   1977 make the government wary of price hikes and nervous
   about public service failures such as the sewer main
   breakdown which caused angry public demonstrations in
   1982.

-- Sectarian violence in Karachi, aggravated by the
   frustrations of life in that overcrowded and poorly
   managed city, erupted sporadically during 1983 in
   antigovernment demonstrations, burning of property,
   stonings, and loss of life. Although order was restored,

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here as elsewhere, government authority was damaged and dissidents who are able to capitalize on such situations are encouraged.

-- In Beijing, 200,000 urban families have serious housing problems and 40,000 young people are still waiting for job assignments. Beijing residents also face serious sanitation problems. Poor living conditions have, in our view, had an incalculable effect on the morale and productivity of urban residents. Older city dwellers, mindful of the deprivations of the past, seek solace in apathy and anonymity. The young--who will ultimately determine the fate of China's modernization drive--know little of the hardships of the past but most of the problems of today. Alienated and cynical, they have lost their faith in the system and channel their disaffection into socially undesirable behavior.

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Ethnic Tension

Governments that are not sensitive to shifts in their country's ethnic and sectarian composition caused by changing demographics will risk outbreaks of communal violence and rising political opposition from politically underrepresented groups. Differential growth and migration rates among key groups change not only the relative sizes of the groups but, more importantly, their real or perceived political strength.

-- In Israel, according to official Israeli data, the politically dominant European-American Jewish population is a demographic minority (38 percent) and growing at a slower annual rate than both the oriental Jewish and Arab populations. More rapid growth of the non-Jewish population (3.2 percent annually or about twice the rate for the Jewish population), if combined with the annexation of territories with predominatly Arab populations, could eventually put the non-Jewish population in the majority and, in turn, threaten the idea of a Jewish, democratic state.

-- In Lebanon, higher growth rates for Muslim confessional groups (Sunnis at 3 percent and Shias at 3.7 percent annually) than for Christians (1.7 percent) and an annual average emigration of an estimated 65,000 Christians between 1975 and the present have rendered the sectarian division of governmental power dominated by the Maronites increasingly unrepresentative. Muslims, particularly Shia, are demanding a voice in the government commensurate with their numerical and military strength.

-- Most governments in Africa face a myriad of problems caused by tribal, ethnic, linguistic, and religious divisions. North-South conflicts in the Sudan, relationships between the Kikuyu and other groups in

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Kenya, the division of power among Hausa, Yoruba, and the Ibo in Nigeria, and the position of the Katangans in Zaire are only a few of the ethnic situations that could cause serious political unrest in the next decade.

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